# HIS 142 Learning Module 3 Assignment

Africa & the Atlantic World

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(Students must type their name on this line for this assignment to be graded.)

**A Benin-Portuguese Saltcellar & a Benin Wall Plaque**

1. In the saltcellar, notice what hangs around the standing figure’s neck, what he holds in his hands, and his facial expression. What is the sculptor trying to communicate about this figure? Explain.

In the salt cellar, hanging over the standing figures neck is a necklace with a cross. This likely symbolizes Christianity, and how they worshipped God. In one of the figures' hands, he is holding a spear and in another it looks like a shield. These items might symbolize that they were strong fighters. The facial expression looks angrier and more serious. The sculpture is likely trying to symbolize their strength as warriors that believe in God.

2. Why might this image of the Portuguese official have appealed to the European purchasers (for whom the carving was intended)? Hint: How did European purchasers want to feel about themselves? Explain.

This image of Portuguese officials might have appealed to european purchaseres because of the religious representation of the sculpture. It also might make Europeans feel more powerful and important while owning a sculpture like this.

3. What distinguishes the *oba* from the other figures in the plaque? What details illustrate the oba’s power and perhaps his divinity? Explain.

The difference between oda and the other figures is that he is holding a spear and shield. This likely illustrates his power. He is also way bigger in comparison to the other officials and this likley is used to illustrate his divinity. He is also different from the other figures because the other figures are holding iron bars used as curency and is playing a flute-like instruments. The difference in sizes likely shows how weaker the common officials were in comparison to obas power.

4. How does the representation of the Portuguese in the plaque differ from that of the saltcellar? Explain the reasons for these differences.

The representation of the Portuguese in the plaque differs from that of the saltcellar. This is seen from the difference in size of the Portuguese and oba, and in the sculpture they are all the same height. Thise makes it seem like the sculpture is depicting the Portuguese as all having the same power, but in the plaque oba was obviously the most powerful based off his depiction.

5. What might you infer from these works about Portuguese-Benin relations and attitudes of the Benin people toward the Portuguese? Explain.

Based off of these works, I can infer that the Benin people held their own against the Portuguese, when they attempted to enslave them, but Portuguese merchants were still able to make a profit from selling Benin artworks to Europeans. This is scene through the depiction of the oba still being shown as powerful and not weak.

**James Barbot Jr., “A Premeditated Revolt” (1732)**

6. How did the newly enslaved attempt mutiny? What did they do? How was the revolt put down? Explain.

The enslaved people attempted mutiny by secretly attacking the sailors with knives, while they were meant to get water. This was done because they found knives and used them to break their shackles and premeditate their revolt. The revolt was put down because the sailors started shooting at the newly enslaved and managed to disperse them, while killing around 28 men, most of whom that jumped off the ship.

7. What precautions did enslavers take in attempting to prevent mutiny afterwards? Explain.

In orderto prevent mutiny afterwards the enslavers took many precautions. They seperated the men and women, increased their surveillance of the enslaves, made sure to not leave any tools unattended, and increased security.

8. How did Barbot explain the desperate wish of enslaved people to mutiny? What were they afraid of? Why might they have feared this? Explain.

He explained that the enslaved people were so desprate to reach mutiny, that when those that were the most mutinous saw that their revolt failed, they jumped overboard. It is likely that the enslaved were afraid of the reprocutions faced from the attempted revolt and believed that death was better than being a slave. They also likely feared how they would be treated by the enslavers because they weren’t seen as equals.

9. Barbot had some advice for other enslavers. How did he recommend treating enslaved Africans? How did he justify his views? Explain.

He recommended treating the enslaved Africans better and not being to severe and haughty with them. This is because he believed that constantly beating them would hinder the work of the ship and could lead to more revolts. He also justified this by saying that enslaved people were still men and would do the same as anyone else if they were in the same circumstances, despite being different races.

10. Do you think Barbot saw himself as one who was kind to others? Defend your answer by referring to specific elements of the text.

I think Barbot viewed himself as someone who was kind to others, despite still contributing to the suffering of enslaved people. I would say this because in the text he mentions how he would allow the enslaved people “much more liberty, an us’d them with more tenderness than most other Europeans” p7. And he justified this by saying that they would have them up on the deck in good weather, feed them twice a day, and even let them smoke tobacco sometimes. That being said, they were still not treated as kindly as Barbot believed.

**Olaudah Equiano, *The Middle Passage* (1788)**

11. What were Equiano’s first impressions of those who traded enslaved people? What did he fear they might do to him? Why? Explain.

Equainos first impressions of those who traded enslaved people was fear and horror. He believed that they were going to eat him. He believed this because he saw a large furnace and a multitude of black people chained together.

12. How did Equiano describe the hold of the ship (the area under the deck)? Provide a detailed description.

He described the hold of the ship as disgusting ans having a loathesome stench. The stench was so bad that he became sick and had no desire to eat. The hold of the ship was tightly packed and filled with heat, making the stench worse. This made the enslaved sick and many had died from their disease.

13. What methods did enslavers use to encourage enslaved people to eat? Why do you think it was so important to the traders that enslaved people ate? Explain.

The enslavers would often offer the enslaved people food to encourage them to eat. If they did not then they would be whipped. Equiano mentioned that one time when he refused to eat, he was tied up his feet and flogged over the water. It was important for the traders that the enslaved people ate so that they could be healthy, and worth more as stronger workers when purchased by other Europeans.

14. What were the nettings on the deck for? What does this reveal about the circumstances of enslaved people? Explain.

The nettings on the deck were meant to catch the enslaved people that attmepted to jump off the ship and escape through the water. This reveals that many enslaved people were desperate to escape and were suffering from the conditions that the slave traders kept them in on the ship.

15. Europeans commonly justified their treatment of enslaved Africans by claiming that Africans were guilty of barbarism. What impression does Equiano’s account create? Who did Equiano find guilty of barbarous and inhumane treatment? Explain how/why his writing was important to the anti-slavery movement.

Equiano’s account created an impression that the enslaved Africans were innocent and had done nothing to deserve being treated so unfairly. Equiano accused the slave traders and owners as the ones that were guilty of barbarous and inhumane treatment because of how they abused the enslaved people, and the conditions they had them suffer through. His writing was important to the anti-slavery movement because it highlighted the kinds of suffering that enslaved people had to endure while under the control of the slave traders/owners.

**Venture Smith, *A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, A Native of Africa* (1798)**

16. Smith’s account is not only historically relevant because it describes the experience of being kidnapped and enslaved, but also because it describes the effects of the buying and selling of people on African society. (Hint: Who was removed from African society? What impact did this have on gendered power dynamics?) Explain how the dispute between Smith’s parents was connected to the exchange of enslaved people.

The dispute between smith’s parents contributed to the exchange of enslaved people because it unexpectedly led to his father, Saungm Furro, Prince of the tribe of Dukandara, and his tribe being invaded by an army and the people getting captured by them.

17. What technology aided Smith’s captors and his father’s killers? How was this connected to the buying and selling of enslaved Africans? Explain.

The attackers had guns and other weapons that they used to capture smith and his tribe. They also had poisoned tipped arrows and filled dens with smoke in order to get inhabitants out. These advances in technology allowed the attackers to capture and sell these enslaved Africans.

18. With Smith’s account in mind, list the effects the trade of enslaved people had on West African societies and cultures. Explain.

Using Smith’s account in mind, I can see that the trade of enslaved people had many effects on West african societies and cultures. It stripped African nobles of many tribes from their high social status and left them and their people at the bottom of the social hierchy as slaves. This was seen through Smiths experience, given that he used to be the son of a prince and came from a wealthy family, before being captured as an enslaved person.

**Zamba Zembola, *The Life and Adventures of Zamba an African King* (1847)**

19. From Zembola’s account, what appeared to motivate Captain Winton? What parts of the text specifically revealed the Captain’s motivation? Explain.

From Zembola’s account, it seemed that money was what appeared to have motivated Captain Winton. This can be supported from the text when he mentioned that once Winton had found 15 slaves crushed to death, he was only upset because their lives as slaves was worth around five to six thousand dollars. Meaning that he only saw the enslaved people as currency for trade, and nothing else.

20. Using your historical knowledge, do you think Captain Winton was representative of other enslavers? Defend your view using historical information.

I would say yes, Captain Winton was representative of other enslavers. This is because he treated the enslaved as cattle, having them packed in confined spaces with little to no air. Using my own prior historical knowledge, I know that enslaved people were not seen as human and were often abused and killed by their enslavers. This was seen when Captain Winston had killed 15 slaves by having them crushed to death while transporting them on the ship.